

Epic Imaginings showcases the rich landscape of contemporary poetry in epic form. Some selections are book-length narratives directly referencing (and sometimes even revising) ancient epic poetry, such as Anne Carson's *The Autobiography of Red* and Sara Uribe's *Antígona González*. Others, like Claudia Rankine's award-winning *Citizen*, are long-form explorations on a singular theme (in Rankine's case, the pervasive implications of racism in America). We invite viewers to spend some time with these poets and their stories. These are not poems to digest in a few minutes—they demand your full attention, immerse you, and expand your understanding of the world.

EPIC IMAGININGS

On view August 27-October 31

UT Poetry Center, PCL 2.500

Perry-Castañeda Library



The University of Texas at Austin
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Each of the books in this selection interrogates dominant narratives, especially around identity, marginalization, white supremacy, and colonialism. In *Engine Empire*, Cathy Park Hong's series of poems challenge the American myths of the Old West and Manifest Destiny, while drawing surprising parallels to China's emergence in the global economy. Mahmoud Darwish's *Mural* was his final work, exploring death and the nature of poetry with the backdrop of the occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Then there is the reckoning that is Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*, in which she interweaves visual art, short vignettes, and personal anecdotes to demonstrate the impact of racism on Black Americans.

IN TERROGATIONS

This collection of poetry playfully utilizes the book-length form and gives readers stories that are escapist, fantastical, and sometimes downright bizarre. Hiromi Itō's wildly imaginative *Wild Grass on the River Bank* tells the story of migrant children who move between Japan and California in a dark, near-future world and explores the nature of kinship and parenthood. For something lighter, Frederick Turner's *Genesis* is a campy sci-fi saga in epic form, directly mimicking Shakespeare. Tommy Pico's award-winning *IRL* is written as one long text message that documents queer life in Brooklyn from the uniquely sardonic view of Teebs, Pico's literary alter-ego.

IN VENTIONS

The books in this selection are attempts to create a contemporary epic. Some directly reference Greek and Roman mythology but also subvert these classical tales through their retellings. Sara Uribe's *Antígona González* uses the story of Antigone's search for her brother's body to give voice to migrants who have disappeared along the U.S.-Mexico border. Others are intentionally subversive, such as Alice Notley's feminist work *The Descent of Alette*, which features a woman descending into the underworld via a subway car. In his adaptation of the Arab and Persian epic *Layla and Majnun*, Qassim Haddad creates a refreshingly modern and sensual rendering of this love story.

RE TELLINGS